

CLASSIFICATION		SECRET	SECRET	25X1A
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY				
INFORMATION REPORT				
COUNTRY	Hungary			
SUBJECT	Urban Area of City of Bekescsaba			
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1. The population of Bekescsaba in 1951 was between 200,000 - 300,000. Although the city had textile mills, brick factories, flour mills and a railroad repair shop, its economic life was almost completely dependent upon the farming activities of the surrounding area. A commercial airport was located approximately 15 kilometers northwest of Bekescsaba. Two Hungarian military units were stationed in the city: a self-propelled artillery unit and a frontier guard unit. Each of these two units was approximately of regimental strength.

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Point #1. ROPE FACTORY. Known as the "Merkuri Fonogya"...

(No details available)

#2. THE CITY POWER STATION. Powered by Diesel engines. The station consisted of one building with a flat roof covered with gray slate.

#3. THE CITY HOSPITAL. (Varosi Korhaz). The hospital comprised two separate three-story buildings, with low gabled, red tile roofs.

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- #4. FLOUR MILL. Known as the Rosenthal Mill (Rosenthal Malom). Steam operated. Trapezium-shaped building, four stories high. It was a gray brick building with a flat, red tile roof.
- #5. HIGH SCHOOL (GYMNASIUM) BUILDING. A three-story brown building with a low gabled, red tile roof.
- #6. THE CITY HALL. Two yellow buildings, each two stories high with low gabled, gray slate roofs.
- #7. FLOUR MILL. Known as the Kovacs Mill (Kovacs Malom). Steam operated. Composed of two separate unpainted two-story rectangular-shaped buildings. Each was concrete and had low gabled, gray slate roofs.
- #8. BUCKSHOT CARTRIDGE FACTORY. Known as the Hubertus Factory (Hubertus Gyar). A two-story, white unpainted building with a red tile roof. A number of brick smoke stacks protruded about five meters above the roof.
- #9. SILK FACTORY. Known as the State Clothing Factory (Aloml Ruha Gyar). The factory comprised two buildings. One was about 100 meters long, 70 meters wide, of gray concrete with a gray slate covered roof. This building, which was four stories high, housed the manufacturing installations and had a red brick smoke stack approximately 50 meters high. The other building, which served as a storage place, was about 40 meters long, 25 meters wide, a single storied structure of gray concrete with a low gabled, gray slate roof. About 600 persons, mostly women, were employed at this factory, which operated in three shifts. Parachute canopies were among the articles manufactured here.
- #10. AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL. Known as the Mezogazdasagi Iskola. Composed of two buildings. The larger one, constructed of red brick, was about 50 meters long, 10 meters wide and two stories high, with a low gabled, red tile roof. The other red brick building was single-storied, about 20 meters long and seven meters wide, with a low gabled, red tile roof. The surrounding area was covered with tree saplings and orchards.
- #11. TEXTILE (ROPE) FACTORY. Known as the Rokka Rope Factory (Rokka Fonogyar). The factory was a gray, brick building about 70 meters long and 30 meters wide. It was three stories high, with a barrel vault, light gray, corrugated metal roof. This factory was operated by electrical equipment and employed about 200 persons working in three shifts.

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- #12. FIVE GARAGES BUILDINGS. All five were of the same dimensions: three stories high, about 70 meters long and 30 meters wide, with low gabled, red tile roofs. The buildings were camouflage painted in 1961. A self-propelled artillery unit, probably a regiment, and one Frontier guards unit, approximately regimental strength, were quartered here. [redacted] a number of anti-tank guns in the courtyard. [redacted] the information regarding the strength of these units in February 1961 from a member of the self-propelled artillery unit.
- #13. RAILROAD STATION. A dark brown, two story building about 100 meters long and 30 meters wide with a low gabled, red tile roof. The middle section of the building, about 30 meters square, was slightly higher and had a pyramidal shaped, red tile roof. The station, damaged by bombs during the war, was subsequently repaired.
- #14. WORKMAN JOURNAL ABOUT RAILROAD TRACKS. There were eight tracks in the station area. The railroad connected Békéscsaba with Budapest, Arad and Nagyvárad.
- #15. LOCOMOTIVE AND RAILROAD CAR REPAIR SHOP. This was a dark concrete building about 50 meters long, 35 meters wide (two railroad tracks ran into the building), and 10 meters high, including the roof. The roof was barrel vault shaped, dark gray, and of corrugated metal. Each end of the building had two black corrugated metal doors about eight meters high. A number of manually-operated cranes were in this shop.
- #16. DARK BRICK HIGH FACTORY. This was a two story, red brick building, about 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. The roofs were barrel vault shaped and covered with gray slate. A red brick smoke stack, about 40 meters high, was located between the two buildings.
- #17. SOVIET ARMY MONUMENT. A white concrete memorial 20-25 meters high, 10 meters wide, and two meters thick. A five-pointed red glass star, approximately two meters in diameter, was located on top of the monument. At its base was a bronze plaque with the names of Soviet Army personnel who were killed in the battle for the city. The monument, during the red star, was illuminated by red neon lights during the night. It was built in 1949.
- #18. STALIN STREET. Formerly Northy Miklo Street.
- #19. ANDRASSY STREET.
- #20. THE RED STAR PLACE. It was open every Thursday.

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- #21. HOTEL BUILDING. Known as the Hotel Csaba (Csaba Szaloda). A brown, three story brick building with a low gabled, red tile roof, located at the corners of St. Istvan and Andrássy Streets. It had 58 rooms and was the main hotel in Békéscsaba.
- #22. CSABA MOVIE THEATER. (Csaba Mozi). The capacity of the theater was approximately 200 persons.
- #23. PETOFI MOVIE THEATER. (Petofi Mozi). Its capacity was approximately 200 persons.
- #24. THEATER BUILDING. Known as the Bartok Theater (Bartok Színház). A white, two story building about 100 meters long and 30 meters wide. It had a metal cupola type roof and was located in Szechenyi Park (Szechenyi Liget).
- #25. THE PIGS BATHING LAKE (Disznó Pázsztó).
- #26. THE RACE TRACK.
- #27. ST. ISTVAN STREET.
- #28. BAROSS STREET.
- #29. BERENYI STREET.
- #30. HAJNAL STREET.
- #31. OROSZAZI STREET.
- #32. SAINT LOUIS STREET (Szent László Ut).
3. Industrial and Economic Characteristics:
- (a) The surrounding area of Békéscsaba is level and under cultivation, with the principal crops being wheat, hemp and sugar beets. The basic manufacturing enterprises were connected with the agricultural products of the region. There were also metallurgical factories and/or mines in this area.
- (b) The collectivization program in the Békéscsaba Region was well advanced. Some private land owners still remained (maximum farm area, 15 acres); however, these individual farmers were compelled to sell half their products to the state at low prices. The great majority of the farmers were dissatisfied with the collectivization program. (I am not able to give any specific instances of active resistance to the collectivization program by the farmers.) Although violators were immediately arrested and the prices of products fixed by the authorities, black market activities were extensive among the farmers.
- (c) All manufacturing enterprises in Békéscsaba were state-owned, with the norm system in effect in the enterprises. A minimum norm would be established which had to be met by every worker in order to receive the basic pay. If a certain

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percentage of the workers exceeded their norms, the basic norm was then raised for all workers. The basic pay rate was increased, but not at the same rate at which the norm was increased. Due to this speed-up system, the accident rate was high.

- (d) The Stakhanovite system was also used. These "sharp workers" (Elmunkas) received bonuses and medals and considerable newspaper publicity.
- (e) The individual worker had to obtain an official release from his employment in order to move from one job to another. In the event management considered that a worker would be more valuable in another enterprise, he could be ordered to change jobs. If he refused, the worker was discharged and risked being declared unacceptable for employment by other enterprises.
- (f) The average weekly wage for industrial workers (February 1951) was 160 forints for skilled and 90 forints for unskilled workers. The official rate of exchange was eight forints to the dollar. Specialists, such as chief mechanics, received approximately 200 forints weekly; engineers received 2,000-3,000 forints per month. Women constituted the majority of white-collar workers, since white-collar positions were classified as "light category". The average wage for these workers was 150-160 forints weekly. There was a tendency to assign women to all categories of "light" work: e.g., barbers, taxi drivers, train and street conductors, etc.
- (g) The following is a list of consumer goods prices in Bekescsaba, established by the authorities in the January-February 1951 period:
 - (1) Monthly rent for two rooms, kitchen, bathroom, and one small storeroom was 160 forints.
 - (2) Monthly rent for one room and kitchen was 80 forints.
 - (3) Bread (white) two forints per kilogram
 - (4) Bread (brown) 1.60 forints per kilogram
 - (5) Meat (pork) six-seven forints per kilogram
 - (6) Meat (beef) four forints per kilogram
 - (7) Meat (veal) four-five forints per kilogram
 - (8) Pair of chickens 25 forints
 - (9) Egg .90 forints (90 fillers)
 - (10) Lard 16-20 forints per kilogram
 - (11) Butter 25 forints per kilogram

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(12)	Milk	1.50 forints per liter
(13)	Sugar (lump)	6.50 - seven forints per kilogram
(14)	Sugar (granulated)	six forints per kilogram
(15)	Coffee (not ground)	90 forints per kilogram (seldom available)
(16)	Potatoes	1.60 - two forints per kilogram
(17)	Wine (red)	nine-11 forints per liter
(18)	Wine (white)	eight-nine forints per liter
(19)	Beer (glass)	1.40 forints
(20)	Shoes (good quality)	240-300 forints
(21)	Suit (good quality wool)	1,600 forints
(22)	Shirt	42-50 forints
(23)	Overcoat (long)	2,400 forints
(24)	Soap (laundry)	16 forints per kilogram
(25)	Soap (toilet)	2.50 - three forints per cake

- (h) Lard, butter, sugar, and soap were rationed, with the prices on all of the above-mentioned items established by the government. The black market prices were higher. I am not familiar with the rationing system.

4. Political and Social Characteristics:

- (a) The population of Bekescsaba was about 80% Slovak (Toth) origin; the remainder were of Magyar ancestry. The Slovaks were primarily engaged in agriculture while the Magyars generally worked in the various industrial establishments. About 70% of the population was Protestant. The Communists apparently hesitated to take any drastic measures against the churches here and there did not seem to be any friction between the various national and religious groups in the region.
- (b) Politically, the large majority of the population was anti-communist. There were not more than 200 convinced Communists in Bekescsaba.

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5. General Information:

- (a) **TRANSPORTATION.** The primary means of public transportation was gasoline-powered street cars. The street cars provided intra-city transportation only; buses were used for inter-urban transportation. The trolley system was known as the *Alomí Ágyagos Ázdasági Vont (AÁV)*.
- (b) **POWER SUPPLY.** Electric power was provided by one power station in *Sekesabai*. Power used was 110 volts for domestic city lighting, 220 volts for lighting outside the city, and 300 volts for industrial installations. Alternating type current was used. There were no restrictions on the amount of current available to private consumers.
- (c) **RESIDENTIAL SECTORS, BUSINESS SECTORS AND STREETS.** The best residential district was in the south-eastern part of the city and was known as the Sixth Sector. Most of the buildings in the sector were villas and were occupied by high government officials, high-ranking Communist Party members, and *Stakhanovites* (so long as they maintained their high norms). Workers lived in the sectors shown as points #1, #2 and #3 [See overlay]. The business sector was concentrated mainly along *Andrassy Street* to *St. Istvan Street* and included *Saross, Serenyi* and *Majna* Streets. New housing projects were being planned for the southern outskirts of the city in the area of the former race track, and in the north-eastern outskirts across the "Figs Bathing Pool". These projects will presumably be workers' apartments. The streets were either concrete or of granite stones and were lighted with electricity. Main streets were 10-15 meters wide, while secondary streets were about 10 meters wide.
- (d) **MAILS AND COMMUNICATION.** Long-distance telephone calls could be made only from the main telephone station, located in the post-office. Telegrams could be sent only from the post-office. (No identification necessary when sending telegrams.) Although domestic mail was not censored, incoming and outgoing foreign mail was spot-checked.
- (e) **RADIO.** There was about one radio set for every two houses in the city. Many of the people did not believe the Budapest radio stations or even bother to listen to them. The Voice of America program had a large audience; however, it was difficult to listen to because of jamming by a special radio station near the *Szolnok (4710N-1912E)* railroad station. The jamming station began operating in November 1950 and was most effective when the Voice of America or ABC broadcasts were made on short wave (50-150 meters). The broadcasts were usually free from interference when on medium wave (over 700 meters), and more effective during the night. Daytime jamming was less frequent than at night. The best period for broadcasting was between 2100-2300 hours because a larger radio audience was then available. Most of the radio sets

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available to the population were "popular" radio sets on which only the Budapest stations could be heard. People caught listening to the Voice of America or the BBC had their sets confiscated and were liable to arrest.

- (f) MEDICAL FACILITIES. There was one hospital in Bekescsaba, which provided medical and surgical services. Free medical service was granted to members of the Public Medical Help Association (Orszagos Tarsadalmi Intezet). All government employees (including collective farm members) had to belong to this organization. Only residents of the city and county were admitted to the hospital, with exceptions being made in emergency cases. The prospective patient was otherwise obliged to go to the hospital at his place of residence for treatment.
- (g) NEWSPAPERS. Daily newspapers published in Bekescsaba were the Viharsarok (Storm Corner) and the Biharnepe (Bihar County People). Both were Communist publications.

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